

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

Game Branch / HPC Project Number: 12-601

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Unit 37B (Mineral Mountains) GPS collar monthly airtime/data transfer service

Region and Game Management Unit: Region VI/Unit 37B (Mineral Mountains)

Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):

- Payson Natural Resource Committee

Was the project presented to the LHPC?

YES☐ **NO**☒ PNRC is aware of this project.

Has this project been submitted in previous years? **YES**☒ **NO**☐

If Yes, was it funded? **YES**☒ **NO**☐ → **Funded HPC Project #(s):** 11-612

Project Type: Bighorn Sheep monitoring

Brief Project Summary: Up to thirty bighorn sheep are scheduled to be captured for release into the Mineral Mountains of Unit 37B in Region VI in October 2012. Ten real-time GPS/VHF radio telemetry collars have been acquired through an increase in allocation of special tag dollar funding (HPC Project #11-612) for deployment during this project. Due to potentially limited funds of the 2011 HPC cycle, only 12 of the 29 months necessary for monthly service fees was funded, leaving the remaining 17 months in need of funding.

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Desert Bighorn Sheep

Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year):

Project Start Date: 10/01/2013

Project End Date: 02/28/2015

Environmental Compliance:

NEPA Completed: Yes☐ No☐ N/A☒

Projected Completion Date: _____

State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance:

Yes☐ No☐ N/A☒

Projected Completion Date: _____

Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A☒

To be Completed by: _____

Projected Completion Date: _____

PROJECT FUNDING

Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested: \$ \$6,270.00

Cost Share or Matching Funds: \$

Total Project Costs: \$ \$6,270.00

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant (please print):

Dustin Darveau – Game Specialist, R6 AZGFD

Address:

Arizona Game and Fish Region Office
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Mesa, AZ 85207

E-mail:

ddarveau@azgfd.gov

Telephone: 480-324-3555

Date: 8-15-12

AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel):

Project has been coordinated with: Game Branch, Region IV, ADBSS

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Following an amendment to the approved 2011 HPC award and due to potentially limited remaining funds of the 2011 HPC cycle, 10 GPS/VHF radio telemetry collars were added to HPC Project #11-612 and only 12 of the 29 months necessary for monthly service fees was funded, leaving the remaining 17 months in need of funding over the next 2 years.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of initial and previous translocations of bighorn sheep into the Mineral Mountains area was:

- Establish a viable population of bighorn sheep in suitable but mostly unoccupied bighorn habitat,
- Increase and diversify the resource values of public and State Trust land,
- Increase the number of bighorn in AGFD Region VI and in the state (once the population expands to carrying capacity of the new habitat),
- Increase the opportunity for the public to view bighorn sheep, and
- Increase the opportunity to hunt bighorn sheep, if the population expands to harvestable levels.

For this proposal the objectives are:

- Continued monitoring of collared bighorn sheep to meet bighorn sheep management objectives listed above for the Mineral Mountains.
- Utilizing real-time data collected and mortality events in efforts to analyze habitat use, distribution and predator relationships for potential predator management plans.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

The initial release of bighorn sheep into the Mineral Mountains was in 2003 when 30 desert bighorn sheep (8 rams and 22 ewes) were released. The 30 sheep came from several sources; 13 from the Trigo Mountains, 1 from the Chocolates, 5 from the New Waters, and 11 from the Plomosas. A second release occurred in 2007. These sheep, seven ewes, one lamb, and two rams came from the Trigo Mountains. A third release of 30 sheep (8 rams and 22 ewes) occurred in November 2010 from Unit 22 and 24B.

1. Following the currently scheduled survey in October 2012 a determination will be made based on population characteristics whether a capture is warranted in Unit 22 and Unit 24B.
2. Based on this determination, an aerial capture will occur in November 2012. Capture operations will follow established Department procedures. Trained personnel will be on site to address animal health and may include Department contracted veterinarian or Department personnel.
3. Up to 30 desert bighorn sheep will be captured. Young rams will be targeted and attempts will be made to capture adult ewes with lambs.
4. The captured animals will be translocated to Unit 37B (Mineral Mountains) to assist in meeting statewide and regional bighorn sheep management objectives.

5. GPS/VHF tracking collars may be placed on up to 10 of the bighorn sheep to assist in post-release monitoring.
6. A population and ram classification survey will be performed in Unit 37B during October 2012 (survey was also performed in October 2011) to better determine population trends and potential recommendations for hunting opportunity.

PROJECT LOCATION:

Primarily the Mineral Mountains of Unit 37B, however, bighorn sheep have been recorded to travel outside of the primary release locations and will be monitored accordingly to the locations found.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

(if the project area is private property, please state specifically and provide the landowner's name)

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IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A COOPERATIVE BIG GAME STEWARDSHIP or LANDOWNER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?
YES[] NO[] N/A[X]

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

The initial 12 months of GPS satellite airtime and data transfer are currently funded through the approved HPC#11-612 through September 2013. Three months will be needed during the end of 2013 (\$990.00), twelve months for 2014 (\$3,960.00), three months (\$990.00) to finalize the 2015 contract, and two months (\$660.00) for collar retrieval.

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

USFS – land management agency coordination with AGFD to meet project objectives.

BLM – land management agency coordination with AGFD to meet project objectives.

ASLD - land management agency coordination with AGFD to meet project objectives

ADBSS – assist with funding and implementation

WOULD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT ASSIST IN PROVIDING, MAINTAINING, OR FACILITATING RECREATIONAL ACCESS?

YES[] NO[X] N/A[]

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

An operational release plan for a November 2012 Mineral Mountains bighorn sheep translocation was attached to the original proposal and is also available upon request.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

N/A

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Dustin Darveau, Game Specialist Region VI